



Out-of-School Time Equity Planning Checklist



The Equity Planning Checklist is designed to support out-of-school (OST) time programs and organizations in fully assessing policies and practices that foster equity. This checklist includes guiding questions to consider during systemwide equity planning and implementation.

Inequity is commonly associated with groups that suffer from discrimination related to their race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, or disabilities. OST programs and organizations can explore implementing accountability strategies to help reduce inequities that are a result of limited access to resources and services.

The Equity Planning Checklist criteria support OST programs and organizations in implementing an equitable system. Specifically, the checklist includes the following criteria:

- › Program goals
- › Professional development for teachers and staff
- › Communication strategies
- › Resolution for discrimination incidents
- › Family engagement
- › Community engagement
- › Equity Evaluation



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The 2021 *Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government* defines equity as the following:

... consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. ¹

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EQUITY FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

Equity for OST programs involves several aspects, as described in this section.

Access: The Wallace Foundation's publication *The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs* states that high-income families will spend at least seven times more money on OST programming for their children than lower-income families.² The result is simply that children from families of low income and others in traditionally under-resourced communities often miss out on enrichment opportunities that the youth need. While there are many examples of how community-based organizations strive to meet the OST needs of a specific community, this issue of access applies across the country. Systematic methods of addressing funding are a catalyst to increasing access. The most recent U.S. stimulus funding package, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act provides unprecedented amount of funding for child care and education across states, territories, and Tribes that can be used for afterschool and summer programs. Increased funding paired with equitable processes and practices can deliver OST programming to the communities, families, and most importantly youth in need.

Process: The process of implementing equity in OST programs involves engaging and partnering with leadership, teachers, staff, families, and community partners in an empathic and safe environment. This process is designed to ensure equitable access to resources and services to all youth, families, and providers regardless of race, gender, national origin, language, disability, or socioeconomic status.

In *Toolkit: Systemic Implementation of Equity*, Hanover Research identifies five steps in the process for creating systemic change:³

1. Assessing the readiness and capacity of individuals tasked with leading the systemic change effort
2. Assembling a leadership team to lead the systemic change effort
3. Involving other critical stakeholders
4. Developing a new system or structure to meet the goals of the systemic change effort
5. Implementing the new system or structure and revising as necessary

Outcomes: Programs must address the needs of youth with different experiences and backgrounds. Therefore, there is the need for targeted investments and program design to produce equal outcomes. An equitable system is possible when outcomes are developed from an equity-minded process. Equity tools, such as the Wallace Foundation's *Putting Data to Work for Young People: A Framework for Measurement, Continuous Improvement, and Equitable Systems* can be used to assess program resources, goals, outputs, and outcomes, as well as to guide programs, funders, etc., in keeping equity at the forefront. Although access and experiences are mentioned separately, both should be purposely addressed and analyzed via program outcomes.

The Wallace framework presents the following guidelines for state system planners and programs to consider in addressing equity outcomes:⁴

- The system:
 - » Sets and publicizes shared vision and goals
 - » Provides equitable access to high-quality programming
 - » Adopts and uses shared measurement tools
 - » Ensures program options meet the needs of families and youth
 - » Engages key community stakeholders (e.g., other community organizations, local government, foundations, school districts, business leaders, youth, families)
- Programs:
 - » Meet established program quality standards (often established by states)
 - » Content matches youth needs and desired youth outcomes
 - » Programs deliver experiences that youth believe are high quality
 - » Content reflects input from youth and community members
 - » Program leaders ensure the professional development and qualifications of staff who work with youth
 - » Program leaders use data to improve practice

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Below are questions to consider for Out-of-School (OST) Time programs focused on developing and prioritizing an equitable OST system.

Develop Program Goals for Access, Process, and Outcomes

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Does your program/organization have an equity policy?			
Has your program/organization assembled an equity team to lead the systemic change efforts?			
Has your program/organization included diverse stakeholders in the equity planning process charged with overseeing the development and implementation of initiatives, practices, and policies aimed at improving equity?			
Does your program/organization conduct equity impact assessments? (This involves an examination of how different racial, ethnic and diverse groups (e.g. income, marginalized communities) are impacted by decisions, actions and policies).			
How does your program/organization include the results of equity impact assessments in the decision-making process before enacting new proposals, policies, and legislation?			
How does your program/organization identify specific areas where equity should be prioritized?			
Has your program/organization established a mission dedicated to equitable access, process, support, and outcomes for all youth of every race, gender, national origin, language disability, and socioeconomic status?			

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Has your program/organization assembled an equity team to oversee the development and implementation of policies and practices created to improve equity?			
Are policies and practices assessed for unintentional discrimination?			

Professional Development for Teachers and Staff

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Do your teachers and staff have ongoing professional development on equity, inclusion, and diversity?			
Does your program/organization target successful outcomes by delivering equitable resources, developmentally and culturally appropriate activities, resources, supports, and services for youth based on their needs?			
Do your teachers/staff assess their own culture, values, and beliefs as well as their effect on the services you provide?			
Have teachers/staff developed family partnerships and engagement plans to build relationships with diverse families served?			

Communication Strategies

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Has your leadership team clearly articulated goals and messaging to stakeholders around implementing equity?			
Does leadership and staff encourage open and honest conversations about equity and social justice?			
Does your equity plan outline strategies for improving communication regarding equity to internal and external stakeholders?			

Resolution for Incidents of Discrimination

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Does your program/organization acknowledge incidents involving discrimination and determine the impact on those involved?			
Does the equity team meet to discuss incidents of discrimination, impacts, and resolutions?			
Does the program/organization notify and engage families and community in purposeful discussion of discrimination incidents?			
Does your program/organization examine policies and practices related to overt and/or unintentional discrimination?			

Family Engagement

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Does your program/organization make families feel welcomed by acknowledgement of the diversity among families served?			
Do your policies summarize how families will be provided with opportunities for meaningful engagement with program development and implementation?			
Does your program/organization include families in the equity team and planning process?			
Does your program/organization communicate frequently with families regarding the progress of implementing your program equity plan via newsletters, emails, or other forms of communication?			

Community Engagement

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Does your staff take time to engage the community to learn about their cultures, concerns, and needs?			
Has your program developed an equity agenda based on your equity community impact assessments?			
Do your mission and goals reflect input from families and community members?			
Does the equity team members serve on local community advisory boards?			

Equity Evaluation

Questions	Yes	No	If not, list the action steps needed to accomplish this goal.
Does your program/organization monitor efforts made to improve equity?			
Has your program/organization developed questionnaires, surveys, and implementation rubrics to assess where they are in terms of equity?			
Does your program/organization evaluate the implementation of equity practices, resources, and services?			
Has your program determined how to assess whether equity goals are met?			

Endnotes

- 1 The White House. (2021, January 20). Executive order on advancing racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>
- 2 McCombs, Jennifer Sloan, Anamarie A. Whitaker, and Paul Youngmin Yoo, The Value of Out-of-School Time Programs. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE267.htmlf>
- 3 Hanover Research. (2019). Toolkit: Systemic implementation of equity (p. 8). <https://f.hubspotusercontent00.net/hubfs/3409306/Systemic-Implementation-of-Equity%20Toolkit.pdf>
- 4 The Wallace Foundation. (2021). Putting data to work for young people: A framework for measurement, continuous improvement, and equitable systems. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/framework-for-measurement-continuous-improvement-and-equitable-systems.aspx>



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